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Statement submitted by World Youth Alliance, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

The World Youth Alliance (WYA) is a global coalition of young people promoting the dignity of the human person in policy and culture and building solidarity between young people worldwide.

Every human being has human dignity. Therefore, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, we should "act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (Art. 1). It is the intrinsic worth of the human person that provides the basis on which to find policies and laws that create conditions under which human beings can flourish.

Sustainable and resilient societies are a measure of development, and development must be person-centered. This requires respect for human dignity, which is at the foundation of the three pillars of development: economic development, social development, and environmental protection. Development must "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

SDG 15 reflects this commitment, through its emphasis on sustainable management of forests in order to combat desertification, land degradation and bio-diversity loss. SDG 6, with its emphasis on water and sanitation, is a key component of social and economic development. The Sustainable Energy for All project will help achieve SDG 7 through access to affordable, reliable sustainable and modern energy. The creation of sustainable societies through good stewardship of natural resources, sustainable energy, access to water and sanitation is a practical way to ensure respect for human dignity.

All these efforts rely on the greatest resource we have: people. Human beings possess the creativity and skill to be problem-solvers. Education ensures that they can develop their skills and contribute to their communities; it ensures that everyone has equal opportunities and the ability to take advantage of those opportunities.

Quality education must be available to all on an equal basis, should flow from an authentic understanding of the human person and foster respect for self and others in solidarity. Young people who understand human dignity are able to make personally responsible decisions and contribute to their communities including treating others with respect. This type of communication fosters sustainable development within communities.

The World Youth Alliance has created a curriculum that supports children in all aspects of their studies through a focus on self-understanding and personal development. The Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC) educates children about human dignity and that every human has it and should therefore be respected and upheld. It shows children that they have the potential to be excellent, develop and use gifts for common good. HDC is culturally sensitive and seeing as it targets children from vast backgrounds it is important for the curriculum to appeal to all. This type of education prepares children to use their gifts to achieve authentic development.

WYA believes that through these efforts we can build sustainable and resilient societies founded on respect for human dignity. We ask the Member States to ensure that all development efforts are grounded in this dignity, and we are ready to help.